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MEDIA ADVISORY: NASA WALLOPS AND LOCAL ARTIST RECOGNIZE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST SPACE SHUTTLE FLIGHT

The NASA Wallops Flight Facility and local artist Robert Lentz will commemorate the 25th anniversary of the first flight of the space shuttle with the unveiling of the sculpture "Godspeed" at 10 a.m., April 14, at the NASA Visitor Center.

The first shuttle flight was conducted April 12 through 14, 1981. Wallops provided range safety support during the launch and tracking of the shuttle during ascent and orbital phases of the mission. In addition, six meteorological rockets and four balloons were flown to compare data with shuttle sensor measurements during the historic flight.

The Lentz sculpture depicts a shuttle orbiter rising into space above its contrail. It is made from the woods of sassafras, cedar and holly, and measures 25 inches in diameter and stands 55 inches high. Lentz made the sculpture as "a tribute to the U.S. space program and to all who have flown and supported the missions."

Lentz, a resident of Pungoteague, Va., specializes in wood turning and sculpture. He began woodworking at age 8. After 30 years with the U.S. Forest Service, he retired and now devotes full time to his art. His works are featured in art and newspaper publications.

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